

Report Spy Flights Over China Continue

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NEW YORK, Nov. 22 [Reuters]—Aviation Week and Space Technology said today that unmanned United States spy flights over mainland China are continuing "despite Nixon administration 'deep background' leaks to the press that missions by drones and Lockheed SR-71 aircraft have been stopped."

The authoritative weekly said White House briefers have told favored correspondents that the flights were halted to avoid any incidents that could affect President Nixon's planned trip to Peking.

The magazine added: "Reconnaissance drones are being outfitted with devices to insure self-destruction in the event of any unintended course deviations. Destruction of an errant drone would prevent a vehicle from falling into Communist hands, as did Francis Gary Powers and his Lockheed U-2 on the eve of the subsequently aborted Eisenhower-Khrushchev summit talks in Paris in 1960."

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Newsweek

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Agenda

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In Peking

Fought, vilified, snubbed during the 22 years it has been sovereign, the Peoples Republic of China now takes note of the President's desire to talk and states that he will be welcome in Peking. It is a high-risk journey and those who want peace will wish him well. They will also keep their fingers crossed. The procedural arrangements alone are tricky: who can recall when a head of state visited another state that he did not formally recognize? Protocol covers such small but symbolic items as what flags will fly, in what position, and where; arrival and departure ceremonies; press and personnel privileges; security arrangements; the question of joint or separate communiques and the language they entail. Transportation may be thorny. Presumably the head of state has his own plane, and the intelligence implications of this are apparent to both parties. This is true also for communications facilities during the President's visit. In short, what is dismissed casually as "technical" consumes a great amount of time and may cause trouble - if either side at any point chooses to use "procedural" questions for that purpose.

The main item on the agenda is of course Taiwan. Here the President is in the position of a man wanting to hurdle a fence while keeping one foot, or at least one toe, in place. He would be faithful, in his fashion, to an Old Friend, while courting the Old Friend's enemy. Chiang has doubtless been informed that the United States will no longer resist Peking's claim to the Security Council seat in the United Nations. But if Chiang insists (and would he not?), the US will try to make the expulsion of Nationalist China from the General Assembly an "important question," thereby requiring a two-thirds Assembly vote. It is reasonable to assume that an agreement with Peking to disagree on this issue has already been reached, and that the trip was deemed sufficiently worthwhile by both sides to warrant separate positions, at least for the coming UN vote. It amounts to Mr. Nixon's telling the Chinese what he will do and the Chinese agreeing that this will not upset the visit, although they oppose his doing it. Then comes the hard part.

Chou En-lai's position has been consistent since the mid-fifties: Peking's relations with Chiang Kai-shek are Peking's business; the American presence on Taiwan is an international question on

which Washington and Peking can deal. The US view has been that before our presence can be negotiated away, Peking must renounce the use of force. Mr. Nixon will probably not now insist on this explicit formulation; at the same time it is highly improbable that the US would "negotiate" an exit from Taiwan, unless the Chinese did in fact "renounce the use of force." So the differences must be deftly skirted; the game to be played is the eliciting of tacit positions which meet the other side's goals, without specifically devising a *quid pro quo* that loses too much face for anyone. This makes the shaping of an agenda a task of extraordinary intricacy. Peking's

objective, at a minimum, is the removal of all US military presence, materiel and personnel from the islands under Chiang Kai-shek's rule, including the offshore islands. Next in order of importance to Peking is cessation of all clandestine operations directed against the mainland from Chinese Nationalist bases with US assistance, whether mounted in this area or elsewhere. Third, less burning, is an end to intelligence collection (reconnaissance flights, infiltration teams). Fourth, and perhaps not foreseen by Peking as achievable in this round of talks, is US renunciation of its mutual defense agreement with the Nationalist Chinese. Finally, Peking would like Mr. Nixon to terminate diplo-

WASHINGTON POST
6 AUG 1971

CIA Patrols Into China Said Halted

By Michael Getler
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Nixon administration has ordered a halt to the dispatching of special CIA-supported teams of Laotian tribesmen into China on reconnaissance patrols from bases in northern Laos, according to well informed diplomatic sources.

These patrols—which sometimes range 200 miles inside China's Yunnan Province on road-watching, telephone-tapping missions—have been going on for a number of years, and their existence was known to the Peking regime.

Nevertheless, in a recent action designed to avoid any possible incident which could sour U.S. relations with Peking before President Nixon's forthcoming trip to the Chinese mainland, the forays have been halted, according to official sources here.

Some sources also suggest that the intelligence value of these operations may also have decreased somewhat.

Although no Americans go on these patrols, the Laotian hill tribesmen who carry them out are recruited, trained and equipped by the CIA, and the staging area for the patrols is a CIA outpost in northern Laos.

The Laotians are native to the border region, and the intelligence-gathering operation took advantage of the normal movements back and forth of these hill people.

While the White House, CIA and the U.S. embassy in Vientiane have never commented on or confirmed these activities—which reportedly date back to the Johnson administration—the patrols have been mentioned in numerous press reports by U.S. correspondents in Laos.

In late 1970 and early this year, articles by Michael Morrow of Dispatch News Service International described the reconnaissance operations in considerable detail.

As recently as June 27, Arnold Abrams of The Philadelphia Bulletin reported that the raids were still being carried out despite the onset of Ping Pong Diplomacy.

The order to stop these patrols, according to informed sources, came very recently. Presidential aide Henry Kissinger's secret trip to Peking was made July 9 to 11.

In another move relating to the forthcoming Nixon visit, a press report last week, citing administrative sources, said the United States had suspended flights over Communist China by high-flying SR-71 spy planes and unmanned reconnaissance drones. This concession was also depicted as a move designed to avoid any incident which could interfere with the President's journey.

However, well placed defense and intelligence officials, asked about the reported suspension, said privately that to the best of their knowledge there had never been any SR-71 flights over the Chinese mainland.

Officials say there was a suspension of the unmanned drone flights some months ago, partly for diplomatic reasons and partly because of technical problems and the vulnerability of these drones to Communist gunners. At least two of the drones were shot down since late in 1969, one over the mainland and one over Hainan Island.

There have been flights of the older-vintage U-2 spy plane over mainland China carried out by the Nationalist Chinese, but officials hint that these flights, too, have not been scheduled for about a year.

The United States for some time has relied on satellites for photographic coverage of goings-on inside China. The SR-71s based in Asia, sources say, are used primarily for flights over North Korea.

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Prudent Insurance

✓ President Nixon has much better liaison with the military and the Central Intelligence Agency, or more alert advisers than his predecessor President Dwight D. Eisenhower. As a result, he has ordered a suspension of SR71 and drone reconnaissance flights over mainland China.

This is prudent insurance against an incident which might disrupt the President's plan to visit Peking sometime before next May. The Chinese resent the intrusion of reconnaissance planes into their air space, just as we would if we were in their place. Most important intelligence information can be gained from reconnaissance satellites anyway.

Perhaps we can never know the true impact on Russian-U.S. relations of the U2 flight over Soviet Russia on May 1, 1960. This reconnaissance plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers was shot down approximately 1,200 miles within the Soviet Union. Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev refused to participate in the Paris summit conference scheduled for May 16 unless President Eisenhower apologized for the U2 flight. Eisenhower refused and the summit conference failed.

We assume that the U2 incident contributed to the downfall of Khrushchev two years later, although his

performance in the Cuban missile crisis in 1962 probably played a dominant role.

We cannot know what will come from the visit of Nixon to Peking. But we do know that we should not invite any incidents that might abort that mission.

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No more China flights?

One week after the announcement of President Nixon's trip to the People's Republic of China, the Peking government issued a "serious warning" about the 49th U.S. military aerial intrusion.

Now the White House has announced that there will be no more flights over China by the SR-71 spy planes. It seeks to avoid an unpleasant incident.

However, U.S. reconnaissance satellites will continue to conduct military operations over China, as will "private" SR-71s on behalf of the Central Intelligence Agency, and American U-2s flown by Chiang Kai-Shek airmen.

The ceremonial pause in U.S. SR-71 spy flights over China do not prove Nixon's peaceful intentions.

The flights prove that China is an "enemy" target, that U.S. imperialism is an enemy of People's China, even as it is an enemy of the entire socialist world and the national liberation movements. The Chinese leaders' hostility to the Soviet Union is not enmity to "revisionism," as they assert, but enmity to the world's first socialist state.

Security of the People's Republic of China lies in the unity of the socialist world in the first place.

U.S. SPY FLIGHTS OVER CHINA ENDED TO AVOID INCIDENT

Missions Suspended to Bar
Interference With Nixon
Trip, Officials Assert

U-2 DOWNING RECALLED

Reconnaissance Satellites,
Termed Not Provocative,
to Continue Surveillance

By WILLIAM BEECHER
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 28—Administration officials said today that the United States had suspended flights over Communist China by manned SR-71 spy planes and unmanned reconnaissance drones to avoid any incident that might interfere with President Nixon's forthcoming visit to Peking.

But, it was reported, American reconnaissance satellites will continue missions over China. Such missions are considered relatively unprovocative since they are well above the airspace of China.

In 1960, it was recalled, a planned conference between President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev was called off by the Soviet Union after an American U-2 spy plane had been shot down over Soviet territory.

U-2 planes are flown over the Chinese mainland by Chinese Nationalists from Taiwan, an official informant said "the mainland Chinese have good enough radar to distinguish between an overflight by the kind of aircraft we possess and the kind flown by the Chinese Nationalists."

Political Reasons Override

Informants said the political reasons for the decision to halt American flights were regarded

as much more compelling than continued intelligence from an occasional SR-71 or drone mission. Some sources also noted that the suspension conceivably might be lifted after President Nixon's visit to China, although a similar suspension of flights over the Soviet Union, instituted after the 1960 U-2 incident, remains in effect.

White House officials, in reporting July 16 on Henry A. Kissinger's conversations in Peking with Premier Chou En-lai about the Nixon visit, expressed confidence that neither nation "will knowingly do something that would undermine the prospects of something that it took so long to prepare and that it took such painful decisions to reach."

Satellites Play Key Role

Although officials were reluctant to discuss the specifics of American intelligence-gathering activities in relation to China, the following details have been pieced together from well-informed sources:

The bulk of photographic reconnaissance is done by spy satellites operating at altitudes of about 100 miles. Photos taken from that altitude would allow analysts to determine, say, the type of aircraft sitting on a field but not to read its wing markings or discern details of armament.

If a new type of aircraft was spotted by a satellite, intelligence officials could call for an SR-71 mission to get clearer, more detailed pictures. Cameras carried by the SR-71, which flies at an altitude of about 80,000 feet, reportedly can capture small details.

According to the informants, a handful of SR-71, operated by the Air Force, normally fly from Okinawa. There are additional SR-71's in the Far East, they say, flown by civilian pilots under contract to the Central Intelligence Agency.

Because of its high altitude and great speed—more than 2,000 miles an hour—the SR-71 is not believed vulnerable either to Chinese surface-to-air missiles or interceptor aircraft. It can provide photographic coverage of about 60,000 square miles in an hour.

The U-2, by contrast, has a maximum altitude of roughly 70,000 feet and a top speed of about 500 miles an hour.

The drone, the Ryan Firebee, is also used for some reconnaissance missions. Typically a C-130 "mother ship" carries two drones to a point outside the defenses of mainland China, where it launches them. They fly a predetermined course and return to a safe point over water where they are parachuted down and recovered.

Peking has publicly protested nearly 500 incursions of its airspace by United States aircraft.

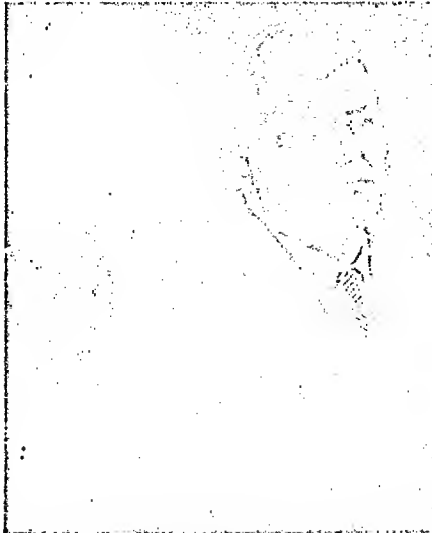
The United States also uses SR-71's and drones over North Vietnam and North Korea. Besides cameras, the SR-71's also carry equipment to monitor and record radar and radio transmissions.

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INTELLIGENCE REPORT

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FRANCIS GARY POWERS AT MOSCOW U-2 TRIAL.

LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

Every week or so Communist China announces a "serious warning" against overflights by American aircraft.

Usually the warning comes from the New China News Agency whose broadcasts are picked up in Tokyo, Hong Kong, and other Far Eastern listening posts.

A recent one declares, "U.S. military aircraft flew over Yungshing Island in Kwangtung Province on four occasions this past Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

"A spokesman of the Chinese Foreign Ministry has been authorized to issue the 480th serious warning."

It is no secret that un-

marked American spy planes are regularly overflying Red China on photographic missions. Frequently our men fly SR-71 reconnaissance jets at heights of 80,000 feet or higher. They take off from the Kadena Air Force Base in Okinawa, streak across the Chinese mainland, return in a few hours and drop their film via parachute just in case their planes might crash.

These are definite spy missions; and while the Chinese have not yet developed anti-aircraft missiles sophisticated enough to bring down an SR-71, it is just a question of time before they do.

It was on a similar spy mission in 1960 that the Russians shot down Francis Gary Powers in his U-2, thus precipitating a crisis with the Soviet Union and leading to the subsequent deposal of Nikita Khrushchev as Premier.

For months Khrushchev had been telling the Soviet military hierarchy that he knew and understood Eisenhower, that the American President was a man who could be trusted. Then the U-2 incident developed, and Khrushchev's credibility was reduced to zero.

If American spy planes are shot down over China, we will have no recourse to the court of public opinion.

2 FEB 1971

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The Washington Merry-Go-Round

SR-71s Eye China From 80,000 Feet

By Jack Anderson

American crews are flying spy planes over Red China, thus risking another U-2 incident, to photograph military developments on the Chinese mainland.

The downing in Russia of a U-2 spy plane, with a sheepish American pilot aboard, broke up a Big Four conference and precipitated a crisis with the Kremlin in 1950. During the uproar that followed, an embarrassed President Eisenhower halted U-2 flights over Russia.

But U-2 pilots with kaleidoscopic cameras continued to spy from the stratosphere upon China. They now, however, fly pencil-shaped, SR-71 reconnaissance jets, which soar faster than 2,000 miles per hour and higher than 80,000 feet.

The Chinese, meanwhile, are developing more sophisticated radar and anti-aircraft missiles, which might bring down a future SR-71 and repeat the U-2 embarrassment all over again.

Certainly, it's no secret to Red agents that two-man American crews blast off regularly from Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa, in mid-morning on spy flights over the Chinese mainland. They streak almost straight up until they disappear like tiny black needles into the distant silver lining.

SR-71 reconnaissance planes each can film 60,000 square miles in one hour.

In late afternoon, the returning spy planes contact the tower at Kadena with a code signal. The controllers immediately warn off other aircraft. Then one by one, the SR-71s "drop the box" on their first pass.

Translated from intelligence lingo, this means the film packets are dropped by parachute. The objective is to make sure the precious film, obtained at such jeopardy to the lives of the volunteer pilot and reconnaissance officer, is safe even if the multi-million-dollar aircraft should crash on landing.

At Kadena, the black, two-engine, delta-winged SR-71s are set apart from the buffalolike B-52 bombers. There isn't a spy on Okinawa who doesn't know the mission of the unmarked spy planes. Communist runners sometimes wait on the roads for the SR-71s to take off so the news can be flashed by clandestine radio to the Chinese.

An Air Force spokesman, not unexpectedly, refused to comment on the spy flights. All he would say was that the SR-71 flies so high that "most residents along the routes are unaware of its presence."

Washing Whirl

Too Much Economy — The White House put economy ahead of good judgment in dispatching only one funeral plane to Georgia for Sen. Richard Russell's funeral. State Secretary Bill Rogers, Defense Secretary Mel Laird, CIA Director Dick Helms and every member of the Joint Chiefs were loaded aboard the same plane. The dispatchers shuddered at the thought of what would happen if the plane should crash.